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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002900

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO GOT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS
TOLERANCE

REF: A. SECSTATE 83768

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2840

Classified by Ambassador Eric S. Edelman; reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (U) The Ambassador delivered reftel A points May 18 to MFA U/S Tuygan, reiterating points raised by EUR DAS Kennedy during her May 3 visit to Ankara. He emphasized that PM Erdogan and FM Gul should be prepared to discuss human rights issues during their upcoming visit to Washington.

[1](#)2. (C) Tuygan acknowledged that the GOT's failure to name a lead EU negotiator had created the appearance of stagnation in Turkey's EU candidacy. He said the failure is due to a political conflict between Erdogan and Gul. Nevertheless, he insisted the GOT is committed to EU membership and is pressing ahead on all fronts.

[1](#)3. (C) Tuygan said the Turkish Parliament is expected to pass three comprehensive new laws -- the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Execution of Punishments Law -- by June 1. He averred that adoption of the legislation should bolster Turkey's EU candidacy. The Ambassador noted that concerns had been raised about some of the last-minute amendments to the laws, which would apparently scale back some of the rights established in the original drafts (reftel B). He urged the GOT to remove language from the reasoning attached to the Penal Code that would appear to punish controversial speech regarding Cyprus and Armenia. If the language is left intact, it will generate political controversy that could overshadow positive elements of the legislation.

Comment

[1](#)4. (C) Tuygan's claim that the GOT, despite appearances, continues to make good progress on the EU front is a standard refrain these days. However, close contacts in the bureaucracy tell us there has not been a coordinated GOT approach to EU reform since the December Summit. While individual offices may be making preparations for the October start of negotiations, the GOT's Secretariat General for EU Affairs has not met with other ministries since the Summit to coordinate reform efforts. We hope that the GOT will soon appoint an EU negotiator who can demonstrate leadership and inject life into the process.

EDELMAN